

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Regarding the Claims in General:

Claims 18-39 remain pending. Claims 18-21, 24, 26, 28, 31-35, and 37-38 have been amended to better highlight the distinguishing features of the invention, and to improve the form of the claims for purposes of examination under U.S. practice.

Regarding The Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 15, 22-25, and 33-36 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form incorporating the limitations of their respective parent claims. Because these claims are all ultimately dependent on claim 18, which is believed to be allowable as explained below, claims 15, 22-25, and 33-36 have been retained in dependent form pending the Examiner's further consideration.

Regarding the Prior Art Rejections:

In the outstanding Office Action, claims 18-21, 27-33, 34, and 36-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 35 U.S.C. 103 over U.S. patents to Izawa et al. U.S. Patent 6,440,347 (Izawa), Hervig U.S. Patent 4,377,547 (Hervig), Winfield et al. U.S. Patent 5,900,585 (Winfield), Hsu et al. U.S. Patent 4,954,152 (Hsu), and Weinberger et al. U.S. Patent 5,382,793 (Weinberger).

Applicants respectfully submit that these rejections were totally improper relative to the claims as previously written, and are even more improper relative to the claims as amended. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are accordingly requested.

To begin with, the claims as previously written were directed to a method of arresting propagation of buckling in a pipe, and defined a series of steps for assembling such a pipe and laying the pipe under water. This is a well-developed and active art, yet none of the references applied by the Examiner has anything to do with underwater pipes or arresting buckling. Winfield and Hervig related to high voltage cables, Izawa relates to fusing rollers for copiers or printers, Hsu relates to optical fibers, and Weinberger relates to a sample chamber for a mass spectrometer.

In rejecting the claims, the Examiner clearly ignored specific recitations of the structural elements being assembled, both in the preamble of base claim 18, and in the bodies of the claims.

Nevertheless, upon further consideration, it has been recognized that the claims did not highlight well the actual scope of the invention, and that the phrase "method of arresting the

propagation of a buckle in a rigid pipe" as stated in the preamble could be construed as inconsistent with method steps actually recited. Claim 18 has accordingly been amended so that it is now explicitly directed to a method of manufacturing a reelable double-walled rigid pipe assembly for underwater transportation of fluid which is resistant to longitudinal propagation of buckling, and explicitly describes the pipe assembly as being comprised of an inner flow pipe the interior of which defines a hollow passage for transporting the fluid, an outer carrier pipe which surrounds the flow pipe, and a separating structure between the inner and outer pipes which defines an annular space therebetween. These recitations alone clearly distinguish the present invention from the applied prior art.

In addition, however, claim 18 now specifies that the method comprises the steps of:

selecting the material and dimensions of the inner pipe according to the properties of the fluid to be transported;

installing a plurality of sealing blocks axially spaced apart on the outer wall of the flow pipe;

selecting the external diameter and wall thickness of the carrier pipe according to the intended environment of use;

installing the outer carrier pipe around the flow pipe and the sealing blocks,

the sealing blocks having radially opposite faces and being dimensioned to be in contact respectively with the outer and inner walls of the flow pipe and the carrier pipe, to define at least one sealed annular region within the space between the flow pipe and the carrier pipe;

spacing the sealing blocks so that the axial length of the annular region is at least equal to 0.5 times the external diameter of the carrier pipe;

placing a curable compound in the annular region; and

curing the compound in the annular region.

There is clearly nothing like this combination of steps in any of the references, whether considered alone or in combination. Claims 18-21, 27-33, 34, and 36-37 should accordingly be allowed, along with claims 22-26, 34, 35, 38, and 39.

Moreover, it should be noted in passing that relative to the manufacturing steps concerning arresting propagation of buckling, the changes in claim 18 are essentially formal in nature, and that these changes do not alter the scope of the claims.

Rejected claims 19-21, 27-33, 34, and 36-37 are dependent on allowable claim 18, and are allowable for the reasons stated above. In addition, these claim recite steps which, in combination with the steps recited in claim 18, are neither taught nor suggested in the references whether considered alone or in combination.

In view of the foregoing, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully solicited.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Lawrence A Hoffman
Name of applicant, assignee or
Registered Representative

Lawrence A Hoffman
Signature

March 18, 2001
Date of Signature

LAH:sk

Respectfully submitted,

Lawrence A Hoffman
Lawrence A Hoffman
Registration No.: 22,436
OSTROLENK, FABER, GERB & SOFFEN, LLP
1180 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10036-8403
Telephone: (212) 382-0700